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ABSTRACT

This report is based on the idea that interaction in business negotiations must be describable in terms that accord with the priorities of the interactors themselves. A descriptive model is discussed that aims to accommodate and integrate approaches that are essentially linguistic and those that are business oriented. It is argued that a dynamic model of linguistic description contributes to the understanding of the structure of negotiation discourse and to the pattern of the exchange of information that is at the center of it. It is suggested that negotiation discourse is an outcome of the joint effect of three contextual parameters: the status of subsequent roles of the negotiators; the participants' assumptions about the type and degree of business motivation involved; and the agendas of the companies involved. (JL)

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Business Negotiations: Linguistic Strategies and the Company Agenda

Introduction

This paper is based on the idea that interaction in business negotiations must be describable in terms which accord with the priorities of the interactors themselves - representatives of the business community, above all those involved, in one way or another, with negotiating.1) The descriptive model discussed in this paper aims to accommodate, and indeed integrate, approaches which are essentially linguistic, and those which are essentially business-oriented. These two research approaches are not seen as alternatives, but rather as complementary: it is suggested that the major categories used can be mutually acceptable - yet with healthy divergence in descriptive detail.

Negotiations are viewed as a facility available to a company in the quest for information needed to make business decisions. (cf. Holden 1987). For companies, the raison d'etre of negotiation interaction is, in this study, taken to be the acquisition of information, the preparation for decision making, and the nurturing of business relations. Conflict, and conflict resolution, are present only in as much as there is an in-built controversary between the positions of Buyer and Seller. A distinction should therefore be made on the one hand between relationship-building negotiations, which aim at buying and selling, and, on the other hand, conflict-solving negotiations which aim at ending a disagreement between the two parties.

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1) This basic idea is in accordance with views presented in Sinclair 1981 and 1985.

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The Information Quest

For companies, the search for information incorporates different categories of information, which, for analytical purposes, can be distinguished. In reality, of course, these categories are intertwined. The study utilizes the concept of planes of discourse, which are taken to roughly correspond to types of information. (This is a free adaptation of Sinclair 1983 and 1985 terminology.)The following types of information / planes of discourse will be referred to:

Interactive information: information that is communicated about the negotiators' relationships with each other. This plane of discourse tells us about status and role behaviour, leader - subordinate relations, as well as the mechanisms used to manage aspects of interaction like turn-taking and holding the floor.

Agenda information: information that is communicated about the matters to be discussed; also about the sequencing and structuring of this information. This corresponds to Sinclair's autonomous level of discourse.

Strategic information: information that is communicated about the negotiation strategy and tactics utilized by the participants; it represents the combined effect of interactive and agenda information. In Sinclair's terminology this would be part of the interactive plane. In this study it is, however, treated as a separate plane because of its explanatory significance for negotiations.

The exchange of information - whatever the type - is taken to have a cyclical pattern, where the interpretation of an utterance is dependent on its sequential positioning. Each party receives information of various kinds from the other and in response offers information to the other. In this process, cognition and learning are essential: Received information is interpreted and evaluated by a negotiator, and added to what he already knows or thinks he knows. (The process is assumed to be similar to the inferential process described in Sperber and Wilson 1986.) Thus he may be able to learn more factual information about the issue at hand (agenda information); he may learn about the other party's expectations, preferences and attitudes (interactive level); or about their common situation and possible ways of reaching an outcome (strategic level). This learning may induce changes in the negotiator's own attitudes: it may reinforce his opinions and assumptions, or raise the need for further information and / or the need to give further information to the other party so that he, in

turn, may be induced to learn and therefore be persuaded to change his attitudes, assumptions and expectations. The type of learning that has taken place determines the tactical steps the negotiator is likely to take in his next move, and, in fact, the information content of this utterance.

The interpretation of an utterance therefore crucially depends on the current phase of the negotiation: that is, on the mode and focus of interaction and purpose at the time (Gulliver 1979). For example: Utterances like "This is my best offer", and "We really find the the situation most unacceptable" carry different information in earlier and in later phases. Also, a chatty anecdotal sequence (Lampi 1986) might, for example at the beginning of a negotiation, provide a useful basis for learning to know each other; later on it may offer friendly, cheerful relief and serve as confirmation of the willingness to be cooperative; or it might even be an expression of antagonism, or derision; it can show desire to pause a while, or to change topic and tactics; it can be a sign of lack of further ideas or frustration, and many other things, according to the current phase of the negotiations and the state of play between the parties. Furthermore, as Gulliver (1979:87) points out, some kinds of information are more likely to be emphasized in particular phases. For instance, information concerning procedural rules is more pertinent to earlier phases when procedure is being established, though never completely excluded from later phases if the parties consider it important.

Because of this positional dependency, it would seem that the way to capture this flow of information would be to develop a dynamic model of linguistic description.

A Linguistic Dynamic Model

A dynamic model views negotiations as an evolving and developmental process - as contrasted with the view, presented by static models, of negotiations as a 'packaged' product. Because a dynamic model shows how the components of the discourse play their part in the achievement of some purpose, the elements of structure are described with reference to the state of the discourse at their point of occurrence - without recourse to hindsight. (See Ballmer 1985) Only language that has already occurred can be taken as given. This, in fact, accords with the real-life situation in which the negotiators carry out the interaction studied: they only know what has happened, and assumptions about what is to come are based on current premises (van Dijk 1985).

Basic to a dynamic model is an appreciation of the two-way directionality of discourse: each element of structure is considered both retrospectively and prospectively. Looking backward, we have to answer questions like the following: Does this element fulfill (partially or totally) any predictions or expectations that may have been set up in previous moves? And looking forward: What framework of choice for the next element is created by the selection of this particular element? In this way the structure of discourse is unravelled.

Aim of the paper

This paper argues that a dynamic model of linguistic description contributes to our understanding of the structure of negotiation discourse, and the pattern of the exchange of information which is at the centre of it. It also claims that negotiation discourse is an outcome of the joint effect of three contextual parameters:

a) the status and consequent roles of the negotiators;
b) the participants' assumptions about the type and degree of business motivation involved;
c) the agendas of the companies concerned.

The paper discusses the ways in which these parameters might form the basis of a dynamic, integrated model, and reports on some findings obtained from an exploratory application of the model. Examples of linguistic strategies used will be given, and some implications for teaching as well as for further research are suggested.

The Status and Roles of Negotiators

The present paper follows Goode (1960), and applies the term status to refer to a social position which is institutionalized (eg. mother, physician), and the term role to refer to a social relation which is less institutionalized (eg. peer relations in play groups). Thus statuses are defined as the role relationships which are more fully institutionalized or which contain a greater number of institutionalized elements. These institutionalized elements take the form of rights and obligations that the community at large - or a particular community - associates with the status; status is describable in terms of these culture/community based expectations.

For example: the status of 'mother' in western society can be realized in a great variety of ways, ie. a mother can have a variety of roles. Yet it would seem that there is extensive consensus in certain features: a mother is expected to look after her children (the way she does this can, of course, vary) and she has the right to get love and appreciation from her children (again, just how this love and appreciation is shown varies greatly).

If we apply the terms status and role to business negotiations - as I suggest we can do - we are assuming first of all that there is a 'business community' among which there is extensive consensus concerning certain basic principles of doing business. This assumption, in fact, seems reasonable to make, given the scope and extent of modern international trade. It would hardly be possible if people did not agree on the rough outlines of what it was all about!

Secondly, we are making the assumption that this 'international business community' accepts the existence of the statuses of 'Buyer' and 'Seller', as well as the overlapping one of 'negotiator'.

The expectations that the community has, as well as the duties and obligations that it imposes on Buyer and Seller, can be gleaned from interviews and business literature. On the other hand the spectrum of roles taken on, ie. the way in which these expectations, rights and obligations are realized, can only be discovered from the actual interactive event. An utterance-by utterance analysis of the interaction should reveal changes and developments in the perception of the roles required in this particular culture / situation / with this particular company / with this particular person.

From business literature and interviews, the following rights and obligations have been extracted as being basic, stereotypic, status-bound behavioural expectations:

Expectations concerning Buyer behaviour in business negotiations:

1) Show controlled interest.
2) Control Seller / situation.
3) Bring out negative features of the product (to bring the price down)
4) Bring out your own trustworthiness, high standards and requirements

Expectations concerning Seller behaviour in business negotiations:

1) Show interest / enthusiasm towards your product
2) Accept (cooperatively) Buyer's control of situation.
3) Bring out positive features of the product (to bring price up)
4) Bring out your own trustworthiness, high standards and requirements.

Cicourel (1973:13) points out that the less well the interactants know each other, and the more formal the event, the more likely is behaviour to be stereotypical, and in accordance with status expectations. This is because there is no other, personal, knowledge of the situation to fall back on. Consequently, the better the interactants know each other and the less formal the situation is, the more likely are they to resort to more personalized and less institutionalized patterns of behaviour. It remains the job of the linguist to describe what kind of behavioural expectations are being fulfilled - and how - in different types of negotiations.

Degrees and Types of Business Motivation

The extent to which a negotiator's behaviour is faithful to the stereotype status expectations is determined by a variety of contextual aspects. Assumptions made about these individual situational variables will serve either to tone down or heighten stereotype behaviour. One of these situational characteristics is the degree and type of business motivation which the participants have, and which they assume the other party has. These assumptions are referred to as business motivation. Business motivation is a function of the stage at which the negotiation takes place within the process of making a purchasing and selling decision: briefly, it represents the answers given to questions like the following: "How keen is he / am I to get the deal? What can I / What can he afford to say and do?"

The answers to these question form a cline from 'very keen - must get the deal' to 'can't be bothered - doesn't make much difference'. They can be described thus:

The stages of

1) Institutional Motivation. This is the motivation and interest shown by any company, which functions in the status of Buyer or Seller, towards other companies, who might be potential suppliers / buyers / cooperation partners. This is the lowest degree of

motivation for getting a deal; it is not focussed, but rather a reflection of the basic rationale of company existence - the raison d'etre of being in business.

2) Company or Product Level Motivation. This is the motivation and interest shown towards a specific company or a specific product, as a result of a selective screening process. It is more focussed than institutional motivation, and represents a(n expressed) desire to do business with that particular company or in that particular product / line of goods.

3) Specific Motivation. This is the motivation and interest shown towards the terms on which a certain product is sold / bought. It focusses on the details of the basis of which the decision will be made. It represents a desire to do business with that particular company, in that particular product / line of goods, on the particular terms that are being negotiated.

Between categories (3) and (4) we have a cut-off point: the point where a provisional commitment will have been made, ie. the decision to go ahead and buy / sell provided the terms are (at all) right. This point has been reached when, for example, all the details have been discussed, and a client is trialling a technical device: there is still a way out, the transaction could go back to square one should something unexpected come up.

4) Commitment Motivation. This is the motivation and interest shown after it is clear that commitment has been made. The implications are, for example, that the Buyer's stereotypical 'controlled interest' is in actual fact very little controlled, with emphasis on the interest, as proved by the commitment already made. The negotiations focus on practical details, often relevant for big, sophisticated technical projects, eg. the specification of manufacturing details for a made-to-measure sub-sea valve.

The final stage of the process is, of course, the purchasing / buying decision - not customarily revocable except through legal procedures.

Negotiations can - and do - take place on all four stages. Table 1 shows how the core data of the present study was placed along this parametre. In a discussion of the preliminary findings from the data, we will see an example of how the difference in placement is reflected by a difference in the linguistic strategies used in the negotiation.

The Company Agendas

Reference to the 'company agenda' is convenient shorthand for what in reality is a highly complex issue of mutual vv. restricted, one-party knowledge, and old vv. new information. Here we shall only suggest a basic categorization plus brief definitions.

From the above discussion of statuses and degrees of business motivation, it will have become clear that the agenda is highly dependent on the way both of these concepts are perceived by the two parties involved in the negotiation. Quite simply, an agenda is taken to refer to what the companies together and individually think should be discussed in the negotiation. For the researcher, agendas are obtainable from interviews with the negotiators / companies concerned. Intentions expressed by the interviewees for the starting point of the analysis; the expectation is, not unreasonably, that these intentions will be reflected in the discourse itself. Obviously, bearing in mind the complex nature of the business relationship and the range of uncertain assumptions that both Buyer and Seller have to make about each other, there will also be conflicting views about 'what should be discussed'. Negotiation literature therefore makes a distinction between an open agenda and a hidden agenda (eg. Kennedy 1985).

By the open agenda we mean the overt expression of the purpose of the meeting. In negotiations this is typically said by the one who assumes the role of the 'caller of the meeting'. It usually consists of one or two items suggested by one of the participants, perhaps added to by the other.

By the hidden agenda we mean what each party wants or plans to take up in the meeting but which has not been overtly communicated to the other party. The hidden agenda may be an offshoot of the open agenda, or it may be something totally unrelated. In linguistic description, it is actually useful to make a further distinction:

Shared hidden agendas are those issues which both parties know will or can be taken up during the negotiation, although they have not been specifically itemized. These are issues which are usually closely related to the open agenda, or offshoots of it, or otherwise relevant to the current stage of the business relationship. They represent 'mutual' or 'shared' knowledge (eg. a recent drop in the volume of purchases, or potential problem areas.)

Table 1: Data placed in grid according to degree and type of business motivation.

Buyer Seller	Institutional motivation	Company/ Product Level Motivation	Specific Motivation	Provisional Commitment Motivation	Confirmed Commitment Motivation	Final Decision
Institutional motivation						
Company/ Product Level Motivation		TP4 TP5				
Specific Motivation			SO PB			
Commitment						
Commitment Motivation				AB TP3 AA		
Final Decision						

Individual hidden agendas. These are referred to either as 'the Buyer's hidden agenda' or 'the Seller's hidden agenda', and represent information that is known to one of the parties only. Tactically, a Seller's / Buyer's hidden agenda can be the trump card!

The different types of agendas will be referred to in a discussion of the analysis of the data, but not discussed in detail in this paper.

The data and methodology for the present study

The data for the present study comprises audiorecordings of real-life business negotiations between two parties, a buyer and a seller (sometimes represented by more than one person). Only the core data was transcribed - 5 events, each 40 - 50 minutes long, with native British English speakers. The rest of the data forms a contrast group.

To determine the significance of the three contextual parameters, two different kinds of research procedure are required:
a) Negotiator interviews, research into the companies and people involved in the negotiation, as well as analysis of the non-linguistic business-oriented literature on negotiations. This enables the researcher to identify the relevant situational parameters. As a result, some basic hypotheses for the making of contextualized predictions can be obtained.
b) An utterance-by-utterance analysis of the actual interaction. Bearing in mind the three categories of information suggested in this paper, each utterance (or, in some cases, a group of utterances) is assessed according to the type of information it gives, and the way existing situational knowledge - obtained from previous utterances - is affected by each new bit of information. In this process, the hypotheses drawn from (a) are tested, reformulated, retested and revised.

In the linguistic analysis, the main method so far used is prediction. Questions like the following have been asked:

The retrospective angle: In what ways does this utterance contribute - or does it contribute at all - to the stereotype status-bound behavioural expectations raised by previous utterances? How does it change and modify these expectations? (In what way) does it fulfill other interactive / strategic expectations imposed by previous utterances? Does it fulfill structural or other agenda level expectations?

The prospective angle: What constraints and other conditions does this utterance impose on the subsequent interactive or autonomous plane of discourse? What structural or strategic expectations does it give rise to?

At the time of writing, the description is not yet complete. Some tentative findings can, however, be reported.

Application of the dynamic model. Tentative findings

1) Negotiations where Seller and Buyer behaviour was closest to stereotype status expectations were the ones whose initial stages included introductions of the two sides - an indication of the fact that some or all of the negotiators either had not met previously at all or only knew each other vaguely.

2) Language behaviour which was in accordance with status expectations tends to be more direct than language behaviour which is in conflict with status expectations. This is illustrated in Example 1.

Example 1:

a) B1 ... i might as well ... state it quite ... categorically that ... whether we place any more orders with you is err... going to be a commercial decision ... based almost exclusively on price

b) ... as far as the true technical performance err... of our finished product is concerned ... it doesn't matter one jot whether it's welding or seamless ...

c) well... to be honest with you gentlemen... those days are past... the market's softened and ... we no longer are ... interested in freeing our back capacity

d) in the longer term we see our usage being between thirty and forty tons a week...

e) ...the only thing that ... would make us change from that i believe is that... if... we could prove quite without any doubt that... using this material gave us a better ... surface finish on
s1: mmm mmm
b1: the finished plated shaft... and... i'm... not in a position to say that that's proved at the moment.

Example 1 fulfilled some of the Seller's strategic expectations besides giving him information on the Buyer's hidden agenda; he now knows what the negotiation should focus on, and this will help him plan his tactics and the content of subsequent utterances.

3) Behaviour which was not in accordance with status expectations was often either expressed through language marked by copious hedging[2] or followed by an explanation.

Please note the transcription conventions: ... represents an audible pause; / represents a longer pause. No silence counts have been made.

A case in point is when Buyer says good things about Seller's product, and perhaps even takes the blame for something that has gone wrong. The following extract is taken from the first ten minutes of a negotiation. It illustrates some hedging patterns in the data, while simultaneously providing an example of prediction as an analytical method.

The whole passage is extremely favourable to the Seller - a lot of nice things are said about the product (which has been trial used by the Buyer). The hedging (which includes pauses and hesitation markers) is underlined.

Example 2:

a) Buyer 1: ... i mean... frankly ... we don't need to talk about this for very long in my opinion ... i wanted george here really to put the final seal on that but ... i think ... we can say with ... a lot of confidence that ... that ... the material has not given us any significant problems... those that are referred to down here are i have to say ... largely ... of ... our own making...

He goes on to describing the results of the yield trials and concludes:

b) ... and therefore... i really conclude that the... yield... is more or less what we would have expected ... it to be....

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2 2 The terms "hedging" and "a hedge" are here used according to Lakoff 1973: Hedges are simply "words and expressions whose job it is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy". See also Lakoff's list of hedges and related phenomena in English, used as a basis for the present analysis. Stubbs (1983) refers to hedges as "prefaces"; Brown and Levinson (1978) discuss the implications of hedging on politeness strategies.

c) i think... the last trial that you did dennis... batch six ... i mean ... was ... was... very good

d) i'm happy that... that... the specifications that you've worked on ... and what you've actually sent us has... been... obviously... fully fit for the purpose...

e) i would say that... frankly... we haven't seen any problems and... if... i was asked to make an assessment i ... would say that... what we have seen has been slightly err... better... than what we normally get.

The copious hedging is quite conspicuous in Example 2. But even with the hedging, the sequence is so favourable to the Seller, that, on the strategic level, the observer (and the Seller?) starts getting suspicious: At this phase of the negotiation the Buyer is not expected to praise the virtues of the Seller's wares - unless he expects to use this kind of sequence strategically later on. So, on the strategic level of discourse, all this seems to be playing into the hands of the seller; what's the snag? The strategic expectations are for the Buyer to soon come up with something negative, something which is more in accordance with his status behaviour.

This expectation might be read into the Seller's interactive behaviour at this point: he is conspicuously silent and uncooperative - does not join in the fun! During nearly three minutes of listening to praise of his product - a long time in a discussion phase of a negotiation - he back channels only twice, and once gives a hesitant (suspicious?) laugh. He seems to be simply waiting for what is to come.

Sure enough: some minutes later, after a detailed discussion of technical aspects, the Buyer fulfills the Seller's strategic expectations and resumes his Buyer-like behaviour pattern by giving the Seller bad news: he downgrades the technical virtues, pointing out that the technical angle is not really very important at all; the product is not necessarily better than what they have now, and what is important is that orders are down, the situation has turned for the worse, and the focus will have to be on the price that the Seller can quote. His language is still hedged, which may be due to the desire to maintain the prevailing cooperative negotiation strategy, but there is a marked difference in degree of directness and explicitness of the language.

Let us now turn our attention to another Seller and another problem with stereotype behaviour: a Seller who has to express doubt about Buyer's good intentions, ie. focus on negative aspects of the Buyer - Seller relationship and thus risk having to behave in a way which is not in accordance with expectations of good statuslike behaviour. He has the job of finding out the reasons for a decrease in Buyer's orders - a task which actually involved finding out where the Buyer was placing these orders - a common enough job for Sellers in real life.

The placing of this particular negotiation on the grid of Business Motivation indicates that it takes place on stage 4 - the level of established relations, where a provisional commitment has already been made. This means that the Seller can afford to be more direct, and more of an 'equal'. This, in fact, is what happens: the Seller assumes the role of a proactive and cooperative leader: He initiates the discussion of the open agenda issue, but does it in rather a discreet way. By avoiding explicit structuring, he manages to produce a hedging effect, thereby (to use Brown and Levinson 1978 terminology) saving Buyer's face:

Example 3:

S: ... umm i've been having a look at ... this is getting down to business ... at how the figures have gone for the err... early part of the year / it's peculiar actually / i haven't done all of it but...
B: compared with what ron

The subtle approach to leadership illustrated in Example 3 contrasts sharply with the explicit structuring in Example 4, where the Seller also takes over, but this time only after having been asked by the Buyer to do so (this sequence comes right after an initial chat phase; the explicit structuring is underlined):

Example 4:

B1: ok coughs well... we know why we're here today... to discuss welding material
S1: right. there are two aspects really that ... we would like to ... one is clearly you've had the fifty ton trial we'd be interested to get some detailed views from you as to how it's performed right through the process and the second aspect of course is the... commercial aspect what it has meant to you in terms of cost and what it means to us in terms of potential selling price and cost have we got a potential commercial deal between the

two companies... maybe we could deal with the... the technical process route side first... would be the logical place to...

The two companies involved in this negotiation also have established business relations (as did the ones in Example 3). This conversation, however, takes place at the very beginning of a new negotiation relationship: this particular team of buyers and this particular team of sellers had not met before, whereas those quoted in Example 3 were old acquaintances. This is significant: it means that both Buyer and Seller are still having to establish their credentials as not only leaders of their own teams, but also in the eyes of the other team - and above all its leader - as tough, yet cooperative negotiators, who are organized and not to be played round with.

As a consequence, in utterance (2) Seller accepts Buyer's structuring utterance (1), and does what he is expected to do: starts a discussion on welding materials. He does it, however, in a leader's way, breaking the problem down, and suggesting a structural framework for the discussion, rather than immediately getting down to detail. This approach, in fact, is accepted by the Buyer, who continues with a further breakdown and structuring, thus further confirming his leader's role. It is, in the end, the subordinate negotiators - in this case the technical people - who discuss the actual details.

4) The data would seem to indicate that the linguistic strategies used by those assuming the roles of leaders include utterances that overtly structure the event, contain comprehensive, generalized references to the open agenda or the mutual agenda that has been - or is just going to be - discussed, and summarize or draw conclusions from the preceding discourse.

Further examples of leaders' utterances used for situational control:

Example 5:

a) B1 so technically i'd say that err... everything is...
S1: we've got a product
B1: yeah we've got a product... yeah

b) B1: all right... well... i think we've settled everything there is to say really...

c) B1; well... i think the ball's in my court now and i'm due to come back to you now on the sizes

S1: ok ... fine. right. well... thank you gentlemen.

d) S1: ok... so technically the product is ok as far as... your process week is good... what does it mean to you in terms of looking forwards... financially

Language like the above contrasts sharply with the language used by the subordinates in the negotiations. These subordinate negotiators initiated topics in eg. the following ways:

Example 6:

a) ...B2: can i just interrupt... that... this last batch we did...

b) there's one thing on that graem... on the surface finish ...

c) excuse me richard may i ask a question ... please

5) Subordinates initiate subjects and issues by using strategies that make the issue seem a sideline, an interruption, or an unimportant detail.

Summary and Conclusions

This paper has explored some aspects of a theoretical framework for the description of negotiation discourse. Three structural parameters were identified: the status and consequent roles of negotiators, the type and degree of business motivation, and the company agendas. What emerges from the discussion of the framework is the crucial functional importance of the concept of status. The paper claims that the structure of negotiation discourse hinges on the participants' perceptions of their respective statuses in the negotiation process - the expectations, rights and obligations that this status carries with it. The decision about the way in which these rights and obligations are carried out results in the participants acting out certain roles. A description of this role behaviour might be captured with the help of a dynamic linguistic model.

Examples were given of some stereotypic status-bound language behaviour, which was then compared with Seller/Buyer behaviour that overrides and / or conflicts status expectations. Differences in linguistic strategies were noticed, which would seem to indicate that a comparison like this is capable of describing and differentiating language behaviour. In particular, it would seem to

be useful in the identification of 'intangible' features of discourse like leader-subordinated relationship.

Reference was also made to the significance of sequential occurrence of language - crucial to the dynamic approach. The dynamic model discussed and briefly illustrated in this paper relies on the contextual insights gained from interviews and business literature. It then proceeds to describe the utterance by utterance creation, modification and development of communicative patterns in negotiation interaction. These patterns serve to revise and reformulate the hypotheses initially made.

The exploratory application of the model to the current data revealed a need to refine the conceptual and methodological framework. However, it would certainly seem to have descriptive power in that it allows us to focus and categorize our observations in a way that integrates the business reality with linguistic methodology.

In providing this categorization, the dynamic model also enables us to make more clearly focussed cross-cultural comparisons: comparison might focus on, for example, the perception of the role requirements of Buyer / Seller in various cultures, and the linguistic strategies used to carry out these role perceptions. This approach would not only give insight into the cross-cultural differences in observable language behaviour, but it would also focus on the inherent similarities in status perceptions - a very important basis for comparison.

For teaching purposes the research would seem to imply a need to focus more clearly on increasing the learners' awareness of the reality of the status in which he operates and the roles that he carries out through language. Learners could be taught some aspects of various types of 'leader' language. (English teachers no doubt noted the similarity of what was identified as 'subordinate language' to the 'polite' gimmicks etc. we teach our EFL learners in language textbooks.) In drawing our learners' attention to aspects like these, we would at the same time be increasing their overall awareness of the tactical power of language - the tactical power that EFL learners, too, can be taught to utilize.

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